



January 28, 2009

Senate Natural Resources Committee  
RE: SB 200

**SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES**

EXHIBIT NO. 4

DATE Jan. 28, 2009

BILL NO. SB 200

Chairman Gebhardt and members of the committee,

My name is Jim Carlson. I am director of Environmental Health at the Missoula City-County Health Department. I am also a 14 year member of the Tri-State Water Quality Council. I am speaking on behalf of the Department and the City and County of Missoula.

The Clark Fork River violates State standards for phosphorus and excessive algal growth from it's headwaters in Deer Lodge County to it's confluence with the Flathead River. Millions of dollars have been spent by municipal and industrial discharges on this stretch of the river over the past twenty years to help alleviate these violations. This bill is designed further the cleanup effort by providing for the elimination of automatic dishwasher detergent containing phosphorus in the counties that occupy the portion of Clark Fork watershed that violates the state standard.

Maryland, Vermont, Minnesota, Illinois, Washington state, Michigan, Massachusetts, Manitoba and Quebec all have developed programs to curtail the use of phosphate containing dish detergent and most have an effective date of July 2010. These states have already recognized the need to keep unnecessary pollutants out of the waste stream.

In Montana increasing summertime temperatures combined with lower rainfall and a good dose of phosphorus from sewage plants and near stream septic systems combine to make the Clark Fork look like something other than a Rocky Mountain trout stream. You don't need to be an aquatic biologist to know that the river is not right when you see the summertime algae.

Research conducted in Lolo, Montana indicates that dishwasher detergent constitutes 15-20 percent of the phosphorus discharged from the sewage treatment plant. This study gave results in the same range as studies elsewhere in the country.

The elimination of phosphorus from dishwasher detergent is doable. Consumer Reports lists several no phosphorus products that do a good job of cleaning dishes at a price similar to dish detergent with phosphorus. The detergent industry has indicated that it will make a broader selection available by the July 2010 deadline.

On behalf of the Missoula City Sewage Treatment we also urge passage of this bill. The 15 - 20% reduction in phosphorus loading accomplished, will make it possible to keep discharge loading to the river of down while providing for growth and new connections. The City of Missoula place a new 19 million dollar nutrient removal system into operation in 2004.

This bill is necessary to work toward compliance with State standards in the State waters of the Clark Fork basin. We need State leadership to help us accomplish this goal. Please support Senate Bill 200.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Carlson

Director of Environmental Health